

# OPERATIONAL CIRCULAR

**Enquiries to:** David Lyon - Tel: 9224 2819  
**Supersedes:** OP 1384/01 (15/02/2001)  
**Superseded by:**

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**Subject: GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS**

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The Western Australian Therapeutic Advisory Group recommends that: -

**THE CONTEMPORARY VERSION OF *THERAPEUTIC GUIDELINES: PSYCHOTROPIC* (CURRENTLY VERSION 5) SHOULD BE A REFERENCE STANDARD FOR PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG PRESCRIBING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

## RATIONALE

Therapeutic Guidelines: Psychotropic represents a recognised prescribing standard in Australia that has been developed on the basis of evidence and a consensus of expert opinion. The guidelines complement and provide a more detailed reference compared to locally produced WATAG Antipsychotic and Antidepressant Guidelines and Algorithms. Where differences occur between the recommendations of Therapeutic Guidelines and WATAG Guidelines, prescribers are reminded that the latter take local conditions and prescribing practices into consideration, and are more frequently updated to incorporate the latest evidence-based practices. WATAG Guidelines are designed to provide a quick reference and a summary of information for every-day clinical practice.

Recommendations are similar in both guidelines and are intended to assist practitioners without being prescriptive. However, they represent a standard for comparison when psychotropic drug use is idiosyncratic, or as an audit tool in drug usage reviews. While the Guidelines provide a sound basis for good prescribing practice, responsibility for individual prescribing decisions remains that of the attending doctor.

Health Service Managers are requested to ensure that this Circular is considered by the local Drugs and Therapeutics Committee (if any) and Medical Advisory Committee (or equivalent), to ensure that the Guidelines are adopted as the local standard for psychotropic drug prescribing. It is requested that Health Service Managers should also ensure that the Guidelines are easily accessible for staff use.

Further information about Therapeutic Guidelines: Psychotropic can be located at <http://www.tg.com.au/>

Copies of the WATAG Antipsychotic Guidelines and WATAG Antidepressant Guidelines can be obtained from hospital pharmacies or by contacting WATAG via email ([RPH.WATAG@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:RPH.WATAG@health.wa.gov.au)). Please note that an updated version of the WATAG Antidepressant Guidelines is due to be released and distributed throughout WA in early 2005.

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**CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER**